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PRAIRIE POTHOLE

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

PREPARATION PLAN

MARCH, 1979

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This preparation plan for a combined management framework plan and environmental impact statement on the Prairie Pothole Area is not typical. It is not a statement preparation plan solely for an EIS, nor is it a preparation plan solely for a management framework plan. This preparation plan integrates the need for a combined process; therefore, it includes many aspects which can be further detailed only as the process is underway.

This plan is supplemented by the attached Pre-Planning Analysis Document which deals with inventory needs and the capability of the District Office to meet them. This preparation plan addresses the inventory needs which cannot be met and the implications of not meeting them.

This overall plan asks for approval on a general approach. Therefore, it does not include typical details such as manuscript flow, complete working outline, etc., because it is not intended as a total handbook for the project. This type of guidance will instead be provided for by Montana BLM's Environmental Assessment "Redbook" and guidance memorandums.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The Prairie Pothole Management Framework Plan and Environmental Statement (MFP/EIS) objectives include:

1. Assess the environmental impacts of range (grazing) management alternatives and decisions, as required as a result of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) suit. (NRDC vs. Morton et. al.) Properly document these impacts and file the EIS with EPA by September 30, 1981.

2. Develop planning alternatives as required in the CEQ regulations and, to the extent possible, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) proposed planning regulations. Submit the alternatives for internal and public review prior to the selection of a final plan. Assess the environmental consequences of planning alternatives prior to the selection of a preferred plan, so that resource managers have better decision options as intended by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and FLPMA.

3. Responsibly and correctly meet the requirements of Section 102 of NEPA. Integrate the planning and assesment process, as covered in the Bureau's proposed planning regulations.

4. Insure that the Havre, Phillips, and Valley Resource Area Managers will be in a better position to provide high quality and effective multiple use management of resources through activity planning which is environmentally responsible.

5. Field test a joint Management Framework Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (MFP/EIS) process (which is anticipated to be normal BLM procedure in the future). During field testing, determine whether the process fully meets the Land Use Planning requirements of FLPMA and the environmental assessment requirements of NEPA. Determine ways in which BLM planning and environmental assessment handbooks and manuals can be combined to cover a single MFP/EIS Process.

6. Field test methods for meeting FLPMA objectives of better utilization and increased availability of BLM's resource planning information, decisions, and rationale within BLM, outside agencies, and interested groups. (See Section 6.5 - Mapping Program.)

1.2 SCOPE OF ACTION

This MFP/EIS will address land use allocation decisions in the Prairie Pothole Area as provided for in BLM planning manuals and in FLPMA. This area includes portions of the Havre, Phillips, and Valley Resource Areas (Section 1.4).

The result of this effort will be a completed land use plan depicting various alternatives, all of which have been subjected to environmental assessment as required by the CEQ regulations. The MFP/EIS (and Summary) will meet the new requirements and objectives of the environmental statement process as outlined in the CEQ regulations. Range Management program alternatives will also be addressed in some detail.

The MFP/EIS process should help resolve several land use issues which have surfaced since inventory and planning was first initiated in the Prairie Pothole Area. These issues are defined in the Pre-Planning Analysis document (attached), and are the result of public concerns coupled with the concerns of the administering agency (BLM).

A socio-economic study contract will include an assessment of the local population's attitudes and perceptions of trends and issues in the area. The contractor will use direct mail and media contacts with the identified representatives of the natural rural communities and interest groups with a adequate sampling of households selected at random and of the general public within the study area. The content of the mailing and media releases shall include a discussion prepared by the contractor of the purpose of the study, a summary of the forecasted economic future(s) and of the social implications of these future(s) and the major issues that have been identified.

Some of the issues which will be addressed in the MFP/EIS include potential wilderness study areas, and the allocation of the vegetative resource among competing demands such as grazing livestock, riparian habitat, critical watershed protection, crucial wildlife habitat, and potential recreational uses. Oil and gas industry demands for leasing of lands and the socio-economic impacts of the various land use decisions will also be assessed within the context of the MFP/EIS. These issues are discussed in more depth in Section 1.6 - Resource Issues.

The MFP/EIS process will not address in detail the following land use issues because of time, budgetary constraints, present lack of demand, or other noted deficiencies.

1. Coal: Detailed information is lacking on the coal resource. There is only a small portion of one designated KRCRA in the entire area and demand is low at this time. (see Special Issue 6.8).

2. Cultural Resources: Budgetary constraints make it impossible to complete the necessary inventories which would give any capability to predict the number of sites in the area or to assess impacts which might occur (see Special Issues 6.8 for further explanation).

3. Wilderness: Wilderness Study Areas may be identified in time to be addressed in this MFP/EIS, but they will not have received sufficient study to allow this document to make the appropriate recommendations to DOI and Congress on whether or not they should be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

1.3 AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION AND EXPERTISE

BLM has the major action with this effort. Due to the land ownership pattern of the area, many BLM activities affect other agencies. Therefore, grazing, access, wildlife, and recreation management activities require close coordination.

The Soil Conservation Service (USDA) has cooperated with BLM in various soils inventories in the Prairie Pothole Area. These inventories have formed the basis for BLM's modified SVIM process.

BLM and the Department of State Lands have local agreements to jointly develop and administer grazing management plans.

BLM also has cooperative agreements with eleven State Grazing Districts in this planning area. Willow Creek, Buggy Creek, North Valley and Badlands grazing districts occur in the Valley Resource Area. The Phillips Resource Area contains the North Phillips and the South Phillips grazing districts. The Havre Resource Area contains North Fork, Cherry Ridge, Lohman, Coal Creek, and Wayne Creek grazing districts.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act to review and evaluate proposed projects and environmental impact statements. EPA also provides funding to the State of Montana to administer the 208 program under the Clean Water Act.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has permitting responsibilities under the Navigable Waters Act (Section 404).

The Bureau of Reclamation has responsibility for Nelson Reservoir, the Milk River Irrigation Project, and other reservoirs and water projects in the area.

The U.S. Geological Survey has jurisdiction over operational development of oil and gas leases, once BLM issues the lease.

The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service has responsibility for ensuring federal agency compliance with the Archeological Preservation Act. The National Historic Advisory Council, State Archeologist, and State Historic Preservation Office are concerned with the protection of archeological and historic values which exist in the area. Coordination under Section 1060-2(b) of the National Historic Preservation Act is required.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has the jurisdictional responsibility for enforcement of the Rare and Endangered Species Act, management of migratory waterfowl, management of Creedman Coulee, Thibadeau Lake, Hewitt Lake, Lake Bowdoin, and Medicine Lake, National Wildlife Refuges, and aerial hunting of predators.

The Montana Department of Fish and Game is concerned with big and small game species, fisheries, non-game species, and outdoor recreation.

The National Park Service presently administers the Chief Joseph Battle Field in the Havre RA. They may also be given administrative responsibilities at Fort Benton if the proposed visitor center for the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River becomes a reality.

There are four Indian Reservations administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) within the Prairie Pothole Area. They are Blackfeet, Rocky Boy, Fort Belknap, and Fort Peck.

Executive Order 12114, Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions, requires federal agency identification of "significant effects on the environment outside the geographic borders of the United States." The BLM also has an obligation to comply with the intent of the 1910 International Waterways Treaty and the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty. Although the pre-planning analysis did not identify any major international issues, it is possible that some may arise on the 75 miles of public lands and 112 miles of reserved mineral rights which are immediately adjacent to the Prairie Pothole Area boundary and the two provinces. In the event major issues are surfaced during the analysis, portions of Executive Order 12114 will apply. This will then entail participation/assistance by the BLM Washington Office and Departments of Interior and State. The provinces will most likely be concerned with decisions on air quality, water quality, migratory wildlife, common grazing allotment permittees or licensees, oil and gas development, and any indirect effects on provincial parks, refuges, reserves, and historic sites.

Agencies with jurisdiction or expertise to comment on environmental impacts, or with jurisdiction on matters closely associated with the use of public lands for grazing or competing uses, include the following:

AGENCY	JURIS-DICTION	EXPER-TISE
National Park Service	X	X
USDI, Bureau of Reclamation	X	
USDI, Fish & Wildlife Service	X	X
USDI, Geological Survey	X	X
USDI, Bureau of Indian Affairs	X	
USDA, Soil Conservation Service	X	X
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency		X
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (Formerly Bureau of Outdoor Recreation)	X	X
Army Corps of Engineers	X	
Nat'l Advisory Council on Historic Preservation		X
Department of State Lands	X	
Montana Department of Fish & Game	X	X
Montana Historic Preservation Officer		X
Montana State Archeologist		X
Mont. Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation		X
Mont. Association of State Grazing Districts	X	
Montana Department of Community Affairs		X
Science and Education Administration (Formerly Agricultural Research Service)		X
Associated County Planning Boards		X
University of Montana, Missoula		X
Montana State University, Bozeman		X
Northern Montana College, Havre		X
Provincial Governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada	X	X

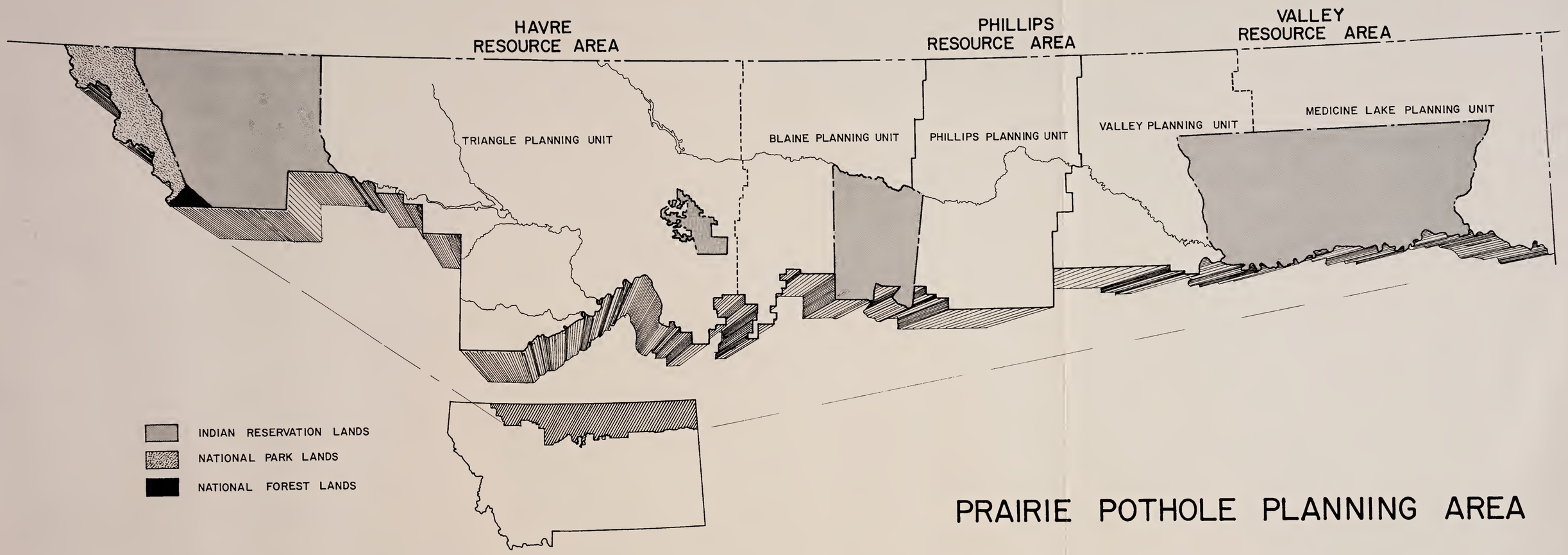
1.4 DESCRIPTION OF PRAIRIE POTHOLE MFP/EIS AREA

The planning area selected for the Prairie Pothole MFP/EIS consists of portions of the Havre, Phillips, and Valley Resource Areas (see map on page 9.) All public lands lying to the north of those lands assessed under the Missouri Breaks EIS, or the Missouri River, in the Lewistown District will be included. The eastern boundary of the planning area is the State of North Dakota, the northern boundary is Canada, and the western boundary is the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. This planning area is now composed of 14 planning units. To facilitate mapping and documentation of resource data, these 14 units will be combined into 5 planning units, from which a combined MFP/EIS will be prepared.

The Prairie Pothole MFP/EIS effort will relate to the land use capability of an estimated 1.7 million areas of public lands; potential impacts which can be anticipated from proposed resource management plans, plus all reasonable alternatives which surface during the process. The MFP/EIS will address (where adequate inventory is available) minerals potential of an estimated one million acres of federal mineral estate under private surface. The map on page 9 shows the resource areas and five planning units. Public lands in Blaine, Phillips, and Valley Counties are more consolidated than the public lands in counties located in the Medicine Lakes and the Triangle Planning Units.

Physiography of the area involved consists mainly of flat rolling plains. Receeding glaciers have left numerous "potholes," usually less than 10 acres in size, scattered throughout the area. Intervening valleys often have broad flat alluvial plains or terraces with numerous deep cut gullies going back from the main drainages. The Milk River, a dominant waterway, meanders from west to east across the center of the planning area. The Missouri River forms a large part of the southern boundary of the area, including a portion of the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River.

Soils of the area vary with the terrain, the deeper soils occuring along low stream terraces and alluvial fans. Shallow soils with limited development and low humus occur on steeper slopes. Productivity is directly related to limitations imposed by climate and physiography with much of the area suitable as rangeland. Most public lands in the area is submarginally to marginally suitable for agricultural development such as dryland farming.



PRAIRIE POTHOLE PLANNING AREA

The area lies within the mixed-grass Prairie Biome. The vegetation primarily falls into two broadly categorized zones, grassland and shrub-grassland. The latter is usually sagebrush. Within these zones there is a mosaic of vegetation types based on specie dominance. Noticeable breakup of these two zones occurs in riparian areas, which can be represented as thin lines adjacent to "potholes" and reservoirs to wide strips of dense vegetation adjacent to major streams and rivers.

Even though not especially diverse in physiographic features, the area contains some diversity of wildlife habitat, and supports substantial populations of both game and non-game species. Big game animals include mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, and elk. Upland game birds inhabiting the area are sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, gray partridge, and ring-necked pheasant. But the area is particularly noted as a waterfowl producing area. "Potholes," stockwater reservoirs, as well as some larger reservoirs, have contributed significantly in providing excellent waterfowl habitat. An estimated 50,000 ducks and 600 Canada geese are produced yearly on public lands alone. Throughout the MFP/EIS area up to five times this number of ducks and three times as many geese may be produced.

Fishery waters in the planning area consist of large reservoirs such as Nelson and Tiber plus numerous small BLM and private reservoirs that are periodically stocked. Typical species that are planted are bass and trout. Some fishing does occur on rivers and a few other perennial streams which provide suitable habitat.

From a recreational perspective, the planning area contains few developed recreational sites. Recreational pursuits generally center around outdoor types of activities, the most popular being hunting. Numerous cultural sites are scattered throughout the area and local interest in them is high. They consist mainly of tipi rings, drive lines, stone artifacts, etc., as well as later developed items such as dugout building pits and dumppits.

Several major trail systems of historic importance exist in the planning area. These include portions of the Lewis and Clark Trail in the vicinity of Fort Benton and the Marias River; the Nez Perce Trail and Chief Joseph Battlefield near Chinook; freight trails from Fort Benton (head of steam boat navigation on the Missouri) to several destinations including the gold fields at Alder Gulch, Last Chance Gulch, and Grasshopper Creek; and the Whoop Up Trail which heads north into Canada.

The MFP/EIS area supports several natural resource based endeavors. Ranching and agricultural production is very important to the area. Depending upon the decisions reached through the MFP/EIS process, as many as 340 new AMPs may be developed. There are now 91 existing AMPs in the area. Some revisions are anticipated. In addition, BLM is responsible for more than 400 non-AMP custodial management areas.

Mining and mineral operations occurring or anticipated to occur in the planning area include oil and gas, bentonite, coal, and uranium. By far the major activity at this time is oil and gas. Much of the area is under lease. Exploration is continuing at a rapid pace, and some major fields have been developed. Approximately 1,000 acres of bentonite claims have been staked in Phillips and Valley Counties. Each county may ultimately contain a bentonite processing plant. The Havre and Valley Resource Areas contain known coal reserves, though there is some question as to whether these deposits are commercially viable or how much demand will be generated for utilizing these reserves in the future. Some interest in uranium exploration has recently surfaced in the Havre Resource Area.

Because of the variety of resource values found in the area, it is expected that some conflicts will emerge in the planning process which may require modification of existing activity plans such as Allotment Management Plans (AMPs), Habitat Management Plans (HMPs), etc.

1.6 RESOURCE ISSUES

The MFP/EIS will address several current land use or land capability issues common to the Prairie Pothole Area. These issues were surfaced through the Pre-Planning Analysis (attached) recently completed by the three resource areas that make up the Prairie Pothole Area (Havre, Phillips, Valley). Some of the more pertinent issues which resulted from this scoping action include:

1. Wilderness Study Areas

   It is likely that several study areas may be proposed and will be dealt with in the MFP/EIS as to the restrictions that may be imposed on other land uses until the wilderness issue is settled.

2. Vegetative Forage Allocations

   Existing and potential forage production will be reallocated among various uses such as livestock, wildlife, watershed, visual resources, other recreational pursuits, etc. This may necessitate some reduction in livestock animal unit months (AUMs), in order to provide needed protection to riparian vegetation where it creates key habitat for various game and non-game wildlife.

   Another facet of forage allocation is that of providing winter habitat for Canadian antelope that migrate into northern Montana throughout the Prairie Pothole area and even further south across Fort Peck Reservoir.

3. Oil and Gas Leasing

   There is a very active on-going oil and gas leasing and development program in the Prairie Pothole Area. It is expected to continue at its current pace or even intensify. Interest in other resources is also intensifying. The MFP/EIS will deal with resolving the potential conflicts between oil and gas leasing and development and other surface resource values or uses such as critical watersheds, frail soils, agriculture, wilderness, other recreational activities, and crucial wildlife habitats including endangered species.

4. Bentonite Mining

   The MFP/EIS will deal with the status of bentonite exploration and mining and some of the other potential problems including reclamation potential, areas not suitable for mining, etc.

5. Predator and Animal Damage Control

Aerial gunning of coyotes is presently permitted on public lands through a state permit system. There is growing public concern that this form of predator control may be conflicting with the recreational hunting of coyotes. This practice also has the potential of adversely affecting such threatened/endangered species as the gray wolf. There was a confirmed gray wolf kill in Valley County in 1978, possibly from mistaken identity by aerial coyote hunters.

Allegations have long been made by many people that prairie dogs are causing unacceptable damage to vegetation and soil resources. Strong proposals for control have been advanced. This issue is complicated by the potential for prairie dog towns as habitat for the rare and endangered black-footed ferret.

6. Water Rights

The MFP/EIS will aid BLM in determing what water appropriations (if any) are needed to provide for future needs of wildlife, recreational activities, livestock, etc.

7. Withdrawal Reviews

This planning effort will also assess the validity of existing withdrawals and the necessity for new ones.

8. Access

The MFP/EIS will deal with identifying the need for and making recommendations for acquisition of access, both legal and physical, as appropriate for administration of public lands and for various public uses of these lands such as recreational activities, mining, livestock grazing, etc.

The above issues revolve around two basic questions: (1) whether the issue concerns renewable versus non-renewable resources, and (2) whether the issues involve environmental protection and enhancement versus economic development, or some combination thereof, i.e., economic development of one resource at the expense of other economic development alternatives.

The MFP/EIS will also address tradeoffs within the same or similar types of programs. For example, an area may have the capability for use either as wilderness, or it could be used for more intensive recreational pursuits. From an economic standpoint, the degree of use in an area may have to be spread between several activities, such as oil and gas development and grazing, or one use may be predominant.

All of these types of conflicting resource uses will be treated in the MFP/EIS under the consideration of at least four basic alternatives: (1) a plan depicting preservation or enhancement of environmental values, (2) a plan addressing the economic potential of the area, (3) a "no action" (no change in current management) plan, and (4) a plan where economic and environmental considerations are both considered (also see 6.1 and 6.2). Other alternatives may surface during the public review stage. From these alternatives, a final preferred plan will be brought forward.

There are other issues within the planning area which will not be addressed in terms of land-use allocations because of inventory deficiencies. See Special Issue 6.8.

2.

PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

2.1 PROCESS FLOW CHART

The process flow chart is enclosed in the same folder with this preparation plan and the pre-planning analysis.

2.2 PROCESS PHASE AND STEP EXPLANATION

The following 5 phases and 41 major steps explain the boxes in the previously mentioned process chart. More details will be developed for the project workbook (Step 6) and throughout the project.

PHASE 1-PROJECT PLANNING

Initial steps in determining organization, approach, and other administrative details for a pilot project.

Step 1-Preliminary Project Planning

Steps taken to date to identify a general process of joining land use planning and environmental impact statement preparation. The process is as yet untried, and will require discussions with the State Office on direction and organization to accomplish the project.

Step 2-Washington Office Approval of MFP/EIS Concept

Approval for initiating the MFP/EIS for the Prairie Pothole area.

Step 3-Draft Preparation Plan

Completion of a preparation plan for review of all initial project planning, and the general approach proposed by Montana for its pilot process.

Step 4-Hard Copy Base Maps Distributed

Hard copy base maps at 1/2 inch to the mile scale for the Triangle, Havre, Valley, Phillips, and Medicine Lake Planning Units will be completed by September 17, 1979, and distributed to the work groups.

Step 5-Steering Committee Approval of Preparation Plan

Concurrence in general approach. Project personnel (Program Manager, Technical Coordinator, and MSO Coordinators) begin to develop the detailed guidance necessary to run the project on a day-to-day basis.

Step 6-Project Workbook

A handbook supplementing new Bureau planning guidance will be developed for the project. It will deal with organization, manuscript processing, and all aspects of supplemental guidance on a step-by-step basis.

Step 7-Completion of On-going Work in Resource Area

The Lewistown District is currently finalizing its Pre-planning Analysis for the Prairie Pothole Area. The District is midway in completing field inventory for the modified Soil Vegetation Inventory Method (SVIM) approach. This SVIM field data is to be completed by September 30, 1979. Concurrently, field data from inventories for other resources will also be completed by the end of FY79.

Step 8-Overall Project Meeting

A meeting of all project personnel, at a location free from outside interference, for a period of two days. Major resource issues, and key focus items for addressing environmental consequences (including eliminating insignificant issues and identifying interdisciplinary needs), will be identified. The workbook will be clarified, and additional guidance will be developed. This will be the official start-up of the project and will complete the project planning phase.

PHASE 2-RESOURCE CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Documenting present resource information, identifying potential for developing these resources, and individual program recommendations for resource use. This phase broadly corresponds to what is now URA 2, URA 3, SEP, URA 4, PAA, Supplemental Guidance, and MFP 1, within the present planning process.

Step 9-Inventory URA 2 and 3, and Socio-Economic Profile (SEP)

For the Prairie Pothole Area; URA 2, URA 3, and the SEP must be completed in order to consolidate a description of the present condition in the planning area (Step 10).

The URA Steps 2 and 3 will be prepared for the Triangle, Blaine, Phillips, Valley, and Medicine Lake Planning Units. Public involvement will continue during the phases as needed for each resource.

Step 10-Present Condition

Completion of the first major section in the combined MFP/EIS as well as the completion of all steps required under present Bureau guidance through URA 3. It will basically consist of combining URA 2, URA 3, and relevant portions of the social and economic profile into one section describing present conditions within the planning area by environmental component. Social and economic conditions will be described concurrently with present conditions asked for in the physical profile as well as program conditions as required in URA 3. (See 5.0, Outline.) A more detailed outline will be developed in the workbook to accomodate requirements of the existing Bureau manuals, and to identify where procedural modifications might be necessary. The information in Step 10 will be documented on hard copy base maps at 1/2 inch to the mile scale using a magic marker system. A comparison of the mylar and the hard copy base map systems would be evaluated in the completion of the conflict identification (Step 29) (Also see 6.8).

Step 11-Finalize Present Condition Maps

District completion of specialist maps from Steps 9 and 10 into finished form, and hard copying some 6 to 8 copies for use at different locations.

Step 12-Resource Potential (URA 4)

This is essentially Step 4 of URA as it now exists. Some accomodation in map base would be developed so that both URA 4 and MFP 1 could be reflected together for a given program area. Public concerns with regard to viable program thrusts within each resource activity will be treated in this section.

Step 13-Planning Area Analysis (PAA)

The PAA would be completed, according to present guidelines, in order to go from Step 12 to program recommendations in Step 15.

Step 14-Major Program Goals, Objectives, and Issues

A major criticism of Bureau planning in the past has been that it fails to look at regional and national program goals in the development of its program recommendations. We have therefore added an extra step in the PAA process to insure that these goals and objectives are reflected in the rationale for the recommendations developed in Step 15, as well as the typical PAA objectives. This step would also be closely coordinated with the completion of alternative objectives (Step 22). The objectives that will be carried forward into MFP Step 1 will be standardized through input from MSO specialists together with input from the various work groups.

Step 15-Recommendations

Completion of resource maps and program recommendations, as provided for in present MFP Step 1. Additional guidance would be developed to insure a priority system for developing recommendations within each program, so that when conflicts are identified between primary alternatives in any two given program areas, there would be some priority in fall--back alternatives in each program to help with the resolution of conflicts.

MFP Step 1 recommendations will again be standardized across the three Resource Areas. (See Step 14.)

Step 16-Finalize Maps and Visuals; Preliminary Edit; and Management Review

This is the second major point at which resource maps are finalized and multiple copies made.

At this point, the specialist will have completed a series of base maps showing present information, and this second series of maps showing resource potential and specific recommendations by program areas. Visuals displaying key trends and information will also be completed at this time so that they are available in usable form at the beginning of MFP Step 2. Narratives should also have undergone preliminary edit and management review at this time. The end result of Step 16 is a completed base information, using program and environmental component oriented work groups, for the multiple use planning process to begin.

Step 17-Steering Committee and Program Leaders Review

Field review by the steering committee to determine that information documented through Step 16 is adequate for the beginning of MFP Step 2 of the planning process and adequate documentation for the completion of the MFP/EIS. Any changes requested as a result of Step 17 would have to be accomodated within the time span allowed for Step 19, Conflict Identification.

PHASE 3-ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identifying resource conflicts, developing broad alternative land use plans, public participation in the development of alternatives, and assessing environmental consequences of various planning alternatives.

Step 18-Interdisciplinary Group Established

Sometime prior to beginning Step 19, an interdisciplinary group representing the various resource programs and environmental disciplines would be established to deal with the interdisciplinary planning process outlined in MFP Step 2. These individuals would still have work groups for support and information, but it would be primarily the role of the smaller interdisciplinary group to carry the entire process through Phase 5. (Also see 3.4.)

Step 19-Conflict Identification

This would consist of the traditional MFP Step 2 of identifying conflicts arising from the MFP Step 1 Program Recommendations. It is anticipated that program recommendations would be stratified into those areas where no conflict existed, those areas where conflicts existed but where mitigable, and those areas in which irreconcilable conflicts existed. The focus of the rest of the Phase 3 process would, for the most part, be on the third category of program conflicts. However, in the development of alternatives, non-conflict recommendations might still change as a result of the objectives being used to develop those alternatives. A hard copy base map system using a status grid made of mylar over the hard copy maps will be used in this step. (Also see 6.5)

Step 20-Programmed Alternative Objectives and Definitions

This will consist of developing a series of multiple use objectives which span programs against which conflicts are to be measured and resolved or mitigated. Plan-wide alternatives would be structured or supplemented in order to address major range management alternatives as presently agreed upon for the Range EIS program. A series of environmental quality objectives would be outlined, and all conflicts would be resolved in favor of meeting those environmental quality objectives. The end result of this process would be an entire series of MFP Step 2 conflict resolutions which reflect environmental quality as the overall reason or rationale for

resolving conflicts. Similar objectives would be established for commodity or resource production and again this series of objectives would be used as overriding in resolving MFP Step 2 conflicts. A third series of objectives, representing the "best" mix or balance of uses across all competing BLM resource program areas, would be established and applied to the conflicts throughout. A fourth set of objectives would be established for the "No Action" or no change alternative. See section 6.1 for a discussion of how other alternatives ("no grazing" and "livestock forage maximization") required by the NRDC suit would be analyzed under other plan-wide alternatives.

Step 21-Develop Initial Alternatives

The results of this process will be the production of four initial alternative land use plans for the Prairie Pothole Area, each resolving conflicts in response to a different series of objectives.

Step 22-Finalize Maps and Visuals for Alternatives; Edit; and Management Review

Steps 19 through 21 would have to be documented on hard copy maps or mylars, or both. A major purpose for the documentation would be to offer public review of the initial planning alternatives. Environmental consequences evaluation would also begin at this point.

Step 23-Public Review

The purpose of the public review at this stage would be to see if the alternative objectives developed in Step 20 match concerns identified in the pre-planning analysis, or should be supplemented with new objectives to produce other alternatives. The public will thus be involved in the identification and development of alternatives before the environmental consequences are documented and before a preferred plan is selected.

Step 24-Document Any New Alternative Objectives

This may involve new set(s) of objectives, similar to those developed in Step 20, which reflect public opinion. It is possible that objectives will not be necessary. Then again, new objectives which might be developed could affect a majority of the conflicts previously resolved in Step 20.

Step 25-Develop Any Other Alternatives

Other alternatives would be developed in the same manner as provided for in Step 21, based on the new set(s) of objectives.

Step 26-Finalize New Alternative Maps and Visuals; Edit; and Management Review

The documentation process should accurately reflect not only the resolved alternative plan that emerged from the previous steps, but also a good display of conflict identification graphics should show the major conflicts which led to the need for resolution. This step would also include editing and management review.

Step 27-Environmental Consequences

The documenting of environmental consequences of each of the planwide alternatives would be finalized in this step (actually begun after Step 22). This would include documentation provided for in the present environmental assessment part of MFP Step 2, according to the guidelines provided for environmental consequences in the new CEQ regulations.

Upon completion of Step 27, final document editing and completion of the document would begin. The summary document (Executive Summary type) would be begun.

Step 28-Selection of Preferred Plan

Based upon all the proceeding aspects of Phase 3, the District Manager selects, in proper consultation with the Area Managers and with clearance according to procedures with the State Director, a preferred plan, and indicates his preference in the Draft MFP/EIS. Since all of the consequences of all the alternatives have already been documented, and since the alternatives were based upon building blocks of individual conflict resolutions, the District Manager would not be restricted to one of the five or six planwide alternatives in developing his one preferred plan. It might be that he would select one of the plans with certain modifications, or select several plans and aggregate their best features. In any case, his selection of the preferred plan in Step 28 would have to be accompanied by a rationale statement which related closely to aspects of Steps 13, 14, 19, and 20.

PHASE 4-MFP/EIS (& SUMMARY) DRAFT, PROCESSING, & PUBLIC REVIEW

Finalizing documents, editing, clearing manuscripts, word processing, and public review.

Step 29-MFP/EIS (and Summary) Completed

The MFP/EIS (and Summary) will meet the new CEQ requirements for an environmental impact statement. We have combined the MFP and EIS to produce one document for wider general public distribution. A summary (Executive Summary type) of the MFP/EIS will replace the MFP Summary brochure. This summary will aggregate resource decisions for the Prairie Pothole Area.

Step 30-Finalize All Maps and Visuals, Edit, and Management Review

This step includes the clearance of final graphics and displays, text editing, and Xeroxing steering committee copies.

Step 31-Steering Committee Review

The steering committee would review the Xerox draft MFP/EIS (and Summary) and indicate revisions as necessary.

It should be noted that the present schedule does not allow for major revisions as a result of this review. Should they be desired, schedule extensions would be necessary.

Step 32-Revisions

The Interdisciplinary Group would make revisions indicated by the steering committee.

Step 33-Processing and Printing of Draft MFP/EIS (and Summary)

Typing, word processing, layout, and printing would be completed.

Step 34-Public Review

The MFP/EIS (and Summary) would allow for the traditional formal review connected with an environmental impact statement, and the customary public review of land use planning alternatives at the completion of MFP Step 2. Comments would be on preferred planning direction as well as on the adequacy of the EIS.

This step also includes time for consolidating hearings, transcripts, and written comments; determining how comments would be addressed; and developing the format for either a Final or Final Supplement with the Steering Committee.

PHASE 5-FINAL MFP/EIS (AND SUMMARY)

Addressing public comments, making other appropriate revisions, developing the Final Supplement, and clearance and final processing of MFP/EIS (and Summary).

Step 35-Revise MFP/EIS (and Summary)

This step would include:

(1) Adequately factoring public comment into both the planning and EIS process;

(2) Insuring a proper final planning document reflecting the best planning decisions and the rationale;

(3) Issuance of a complete MFP/EIS (and Summary) which adequately reflect major concerns and consequences according to the new CEQ regulations.

Step 36-Management Review and Edit

Editing, word processing, and finalizing of all visuals for the final MFP/EIS (and Summary).

Step 37-State Director Concurrence

The State Director would concur with or request revision of the planning decisions or environmental assessment made by the District Manager. Any major revisions could require a schedule extension.

Step 38-EIS Clearance

The EIS portion would be concurred with or revisions would be requested by steering committee field review. This would accomplish all levels of review customary to the EIS process. Any major revisions could require a schedule extension.

Step 39-Final Processing

Final typing, word processing, layout, and printing.

Step 40-Final MFP/EIS (and Summary) Printed; Mailed to EPA

Step 41-EPA Files MFP/EIS in Federal Register

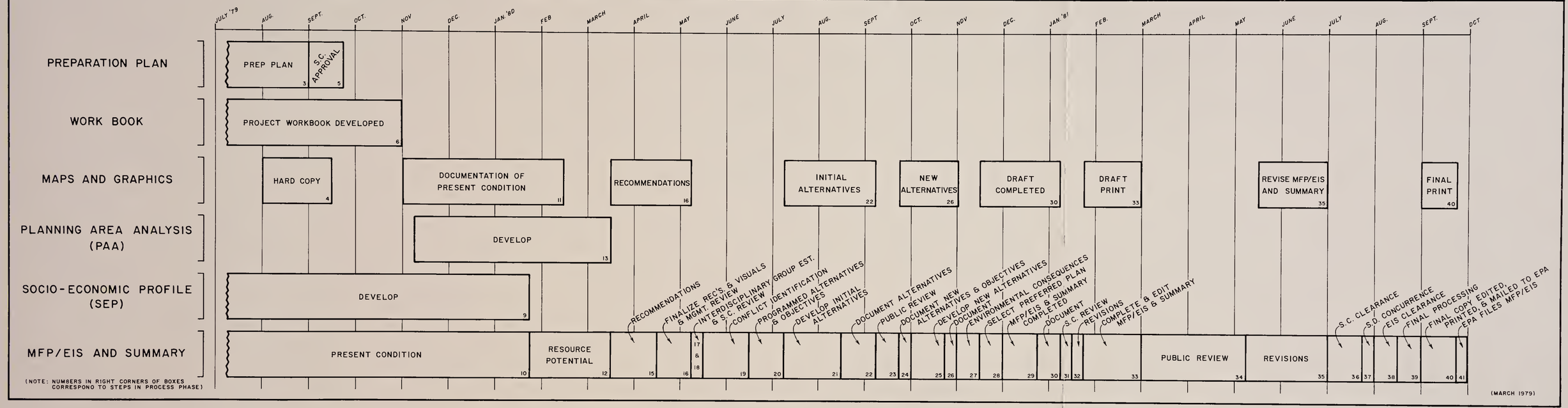
This can take a week or more depending upon the backlog EPA has at the time.

2.3 KEY DATES

	Start Date	Completion Date	Weeks Required
1. Preliminary Project Planning	Ongoing		
2. Washington Office Approval of MFP/EIS Concept	07-02-79	07/30/79	4
3. Draft Preparation Plan	07-30-79	08-27-79	4
4. Hard Copy Base Maps Distributed	08-27-79	09-17-79	3
5. Steering Committee Approval of Prep Plan	09-17-79	09-24-79	1
6. Project Workbook	09-24-79	10-29-79	5
7. Completion of Ongoing Work in RA	10-29-79	11-05-79	1
8. Overall Project Meeting (outside contacts, work group members, advisory committee)	11-05-79	11-12-79	1
9. Inventory, URA 2 and 3, and SEP	11-12-79	01-21-80	10
10. Present Condition (inventory, URA 2 and 3)	11-12-79	01-21-80	--
11. Finalize Present Condition Maps	01-21-80	02-11-80	3
12. Resource Potential (URA 4)	02-11-80	03-10-80	4
13. Planning Area Analysis	02-11-80	03-10-80	--
14. Major Program Goals, Objectives, Issues	02-11-80	03-10-80	--
15. Recommendations	03-10-80	04-14-80	5
16. Finalize Maps and Visuals; Preliminary Edit; and Management Review	04-14-80	05-05-80	3
17. Steering Committee Review	05-05-80	05-12-80	1
18. Interdisciplinary Groups Established	05-05-80	05-12-80	--
19. Conflict Identification	05-12-80	06-16-80	5
20. Programmed Alternative Objectives & Definitions	06-16-80	07-07-80	3
21. Develop Initial Alternatives	07-07-80	08-18-80	6
22. Finalize Maps and Visuals for Alternatives Edit and Management Review	08-18-80	09-08-80	3
23. Public Review	09-08-80	92-22-80	2
24. Document Any New Alternatives	09-22-80	09-29-80	1
25. Develop Any Other Alternatives	09-29-80	10-20-80	3
26. Finalize New Alternatives Maps and Visuals; Edit; and Management Review	10-20-80	11-03-80	2
27. Environmental Consequences	08-09-80	11-17-80	10
28. Selection of Preferred Plan	11-17-80	12-01-80	2
29. MFP/EIS (and Summary) Completed	12-01-80	12-22-80	3
30. Finalize All Maps and Visuals; Edit; and Management Review	12-22-80	01-05-81	2
31. Steering Committee Review	01-05-81	01-12-81	1
32. Revisions	01-12-81	01-26-81	2
33. Processing and Printing of Draft MFP/EIS (and Summary)	01-26-81	03-02-81	5
34. Public Review	03-02-81	05-11-81	10
35. Revise MFP/EIS (and Summary)	05-11-81	06-29-81	7
36. Management Review and Edit	06-29-81	07-20-81	3
37. State Director Concurrence	07-20-81	07-27-81	1
38. EIS Clearance	07-27-81	08-10-81	2
39. Final Processing	08-10-81	08-31-81	3
40. Final MFP/EIS (and Summary) Printed, Mailed to EPA	08-31-81	09-21-81	3
41. EPA Files MFP/EIS in Federal Register	09-21-81	09-28-81	1

PRAIRIE POTHOLE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SCHEDULE

FIG. 2-4



(NOTE: NUMBERS IN RIGHT CORNERS OF BOXES CORRESPONO TO STEPS IN PROCESS PHASE)

(MARCH 1979)

3.

ORGANIZATION

3.1 WORK RESPONSIBILITIES

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is an arm of the Director and State Director including members from the Lewistown District, Montana State Office, and Washington Office. It is designed to provide technical program direction and review of all aspects of the combined MFP/EIS. It should also serve to speed the review and sign-off procedure at the State Director and Washington Office level.

Lewistown District Manager/Assistant District Manager

Responsible for completion of the MFP/EIS as delegated from the State Director, Montana, North and South Dakota.

Responsible for arbitrating resource decisions on the conflict identification and resolution stage of the planning process where Area Managers cannot agree on program direction. If necessary, he will utilize the expertise of Chief, Division of Resources and Chief, Division of Planning and Environmental Coordination to help resolve these conflicts.

Resource Area Managers

The Resource Area Managers in their capacities as the principal line officials for resource planning and management in the areas will continue to be responsible for all aspects of BLM's program in the resource areas. As it relates to the planning project, therefore, all information and staff support for the project must be cleared and concurred with by the Area Managers. The Area Managers will also continue to be responsible for all resource inventories, the recommended planning decisions, and the resolution of any management conflicts reflected in the plan. In this latter area, the Area Managers will provide substantive guidance to the interdisciplinary group (Step 18) assigned to staff and resource program work for Phase 3 of the project. If Area Managers cannot come to a mutual agreement on the resolution of any particular management conflict during the course of the project, however, the ADM (Lewistown) will serve as an arbitrator who will determine the course of action to be taken to resolve conflicts or depict program direction.

Project Manager

The MFP/EIS Project Manager is responsible for the continuing direction of the project, consistent with guidance approved by the Steering Committee.

He will have the primary responsibility for project direction on a daily basis. This mainly includes insuring that work is completed on schedule and in accordance with guidance from the Steering Committee and the Technical Coordinator.

Montana State Office P&EC Coordinators

The State Office P&EC Coordinators are mainly responsible for ensuring that project guidance is given prior to start up of the project, coordinating the assignment of any needed personnel from the MSO level, and coordinating timely MSO reviews to ensure quality control under the direction of the Steering Committee Chairman. In addition, they will serve as MSO's coordinators in the development of the project workbook. This workbook will lay out the new procedures which will be followed in the development and analysis of the preferred alternative and other alternatives, plus any environmental consequences.

Technical Coordinator - District Office

The Technical Coordinator reviews all draft sections of the MFP/EIS prior to the time they are submitted to the Project Administration Work Group for editing. It is his job to insure that the information is scientifically and logically consistent throughout all documents produced. In this capacity, he will work closely with Work Group Leaders throughout the project. He is also responsible for documenting any new procedures that prove successful for the various Work Groups.

Work Groups

One of the most important parts of the organization will be the 11 work groups. Work group members will, in the context of the group, represent their scientific specialties and their program concerns. They report directly to the work group leader as far as this project and Performance Improvement and Position Review elements related to the project are concerned. Should issues arise which cannot be resolved at the work group level, these should be referred initially to the Technical Coordinator who will in turn bring them to the attention of the Project Manager as need be.

All work groups will be responsible for completing the Havre, Phillips, and Valley planning documents up through MFP. The Triangle Planning Unit will be incorporated into the Havre MFP; the Medicine Lake Planning Unit will be incorporated into the Valley MFP. Thereafter, individuals (as yet unassigned) from within each work group (Step 18 of the process chart) will be assigned to a new work group which will be responsible for addressing MFP Step 2 and associated alternatives, with assistance from the other members of their work group. Additional details for all work groups will be defined in the workbook.

The work group leaders are responsible, within defined areas of work, for coordinating analysis and documentation for the management framework plan through Step 1. This will include MSO input to standardize MFP Step 1 objectives, recommendations and rationales. After that point, the work groups will provide support and guidance to the interdisciplinary group (assigned from each work group in Step 18) for the completion of MFP Step 2.

Several of the work groups will have continuing functions different from those of the seven program and environmental component work groups. The following describes their roles:

1. Project Administration

   The Project Administration work group is responsible for public involvement; manuscript editing, typing, and production of manuscripts; clearing formats for typing and printing; initial approval, production, and final clearance of all maps and visuals; printing; and related activities. All maps, visuals, and text will be cleared and processed through this group before any drafting or finalizing is done so that resource information is transferable to a published form. The entire drafting, graphics, and cartographic operation; and all secretarial support will work directly under this work group leader.

2. Support

   The Support work group will deal with management framework plan recommendations in areas such as fire, cadastral survey, road and trail construction, and in similar areas required to support major program recommendations.

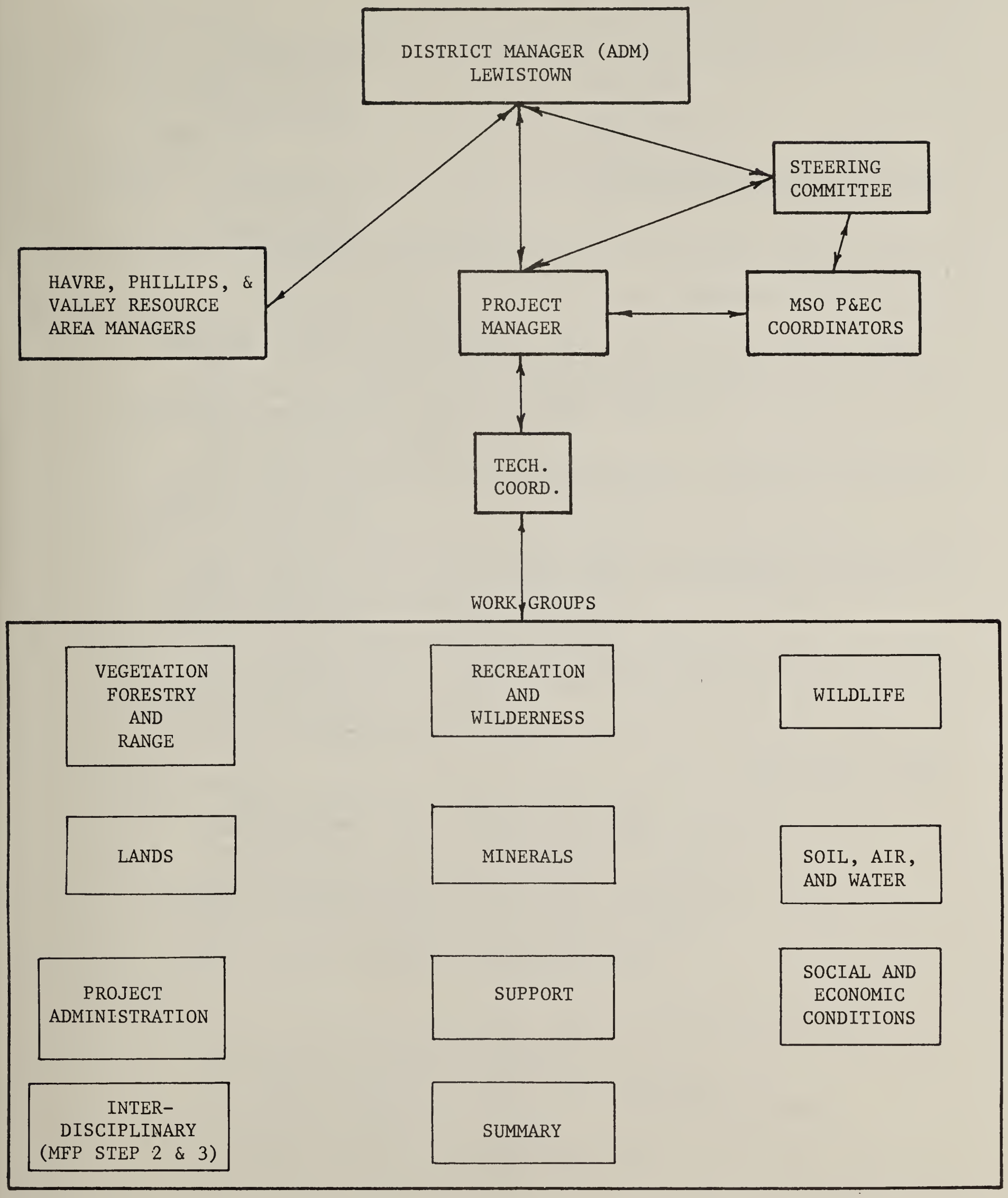
3. Social and Economic Conditions

   The Social and Economic Conditions work group will coordinate completion of the planning area analyses (PAA), and will handle sections on existing social and economic conditions and environmental assessment. However, the major function of this group will be to insure that all program recommendations adequately reflect the objectives portrayed in Steps 13 and 14 of the process chart. This group will coordinate closely with the interdisciplinary group (Step 18) and will take the lead in the completion of Step 13. It will also take the lead in incorporating socio-economic concerns into Step 14 and into the development of programed alternative objectives with the interdisciplinary group (Step 20).

4. Interdisciplinary Group

This interdisciplinary group, consisting of members from other work groups (Step 18), will complete Phase 3 (development of alternative plans and the environmental assessment), and parts of Phases 4 and 5.

3.2 PRAIRIE POTHOLE RMP/ES ORGANIZATION



3.3 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

STATE DIRECTOR REPRESENTATIVE & CHAIRMAN	Ernie Kemmis, Chief, Division of Planning and Environmental Coordination, MSO
LEWISTOWN DISTRICT OFFICE REP.	Ron Bartley, Chief, Division of Resources, Lewistown District
MSO DIVISION OF RESOURCES REP.	Bill Noble, Chief, Division of Resources, MSO
MSO DIVISION OF TECHNICAL SERVICES REP	Gene Newell, Chief Division of Technical Services, MSO
MSO BRANCH OF PLANNING COORDINATION REP.	Jim Binando, Chief Branch of Planning Coord. MSO
MSO BRANCH OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORD. REP	Dave Darby, Chief Branch of Environmental Coord. MSO
BUREAU RANGE REP	Jim Hancock, Division of Range, Washington Office
BUREAU PLANNING REP.	Gordon Knight, Division of Environmental and Planning Coordination, Washington Office

3.4 PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS

District Manager	John Fields
Assistant District Manager	Glenn Freeman
Resource Area Managers	
Havre RA	Don Ryan
Phillips RA	Charley Dahlen
Valley RA	Gary Gerth
Project Manager	Vacant (Ch, Div. of P&EC)
Technical Coordinator	Vacant (Div. of P&EC)
MSO P&EC Coordinators	Bob Bales, Holden Brink

Work Groups: The role and assignments of work group members will be explained in detail in the workbook - step 6 of Process Flow Chart - Section 2.1.

Vegetation, Forestry, & Range
- Vacant, Range Conservationist, Res. Staff LDO, Work Group Leader
- Dick DeVries, Range Conservationist, Phillips RA
- Terry Wilson, Range Conservationist, Valley RA
- Wally Elliot, Range Conservationist, Havre RA
- John Nesselhuf, Forester, LDO
- *Lloyd Emmons, Botanist, MSO
- *Duane Whitmer, Range Conservationist, MSO

Recreation and Wilderness
- Gary Pavek, Outdoor Rec. Planner, Res. Staff, LDO, Work Group Leader
- Paul Martin, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Phillips RA
- Will Hubbell, Archeologist, Phillips RA
- *Al Kesterke, Outdoor Recreation Planner, MSO
- Paul Brink, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Havre RA
- Milo Jenkins, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Valley RA
- *Jim Owings, Outdoor Recreation Planner, MSO
- *Jim Muhn, Historian, MSO
- *Dwight Araki, Landscape Architect, MSO

Wildlife
- Vacant, NRS P/EC Div., Work Group Leader
- Charles Pregler, Wildlife Mgmt Biologist, Valley RA
- Chris Hoff, Wildlife Mgmt Biologist, Havre RA
- John Grensten, Wildlife Mgmt Biologist, Phillips RA
- Mike Fisher, Wildlife Mgmt Biologist, Valley RA
- Valerie Elliot, Fisheries Biologist, Havre RA
- *Holden Brink, Wildlife Mgmt Biologist, MSO
- *Gary Gebhardt, Fisheries Biologist, MSO

Minerals
- Vacant, Hydrologist/Geologist, P&EC Div, Work Group Leader
- Ralph Kuhns, Geologist, Phillips RA
- Roy Lembke, Surface Protection Spec., Havre RA
- J.C. Harksen, Geologist, Div of Res., LDO (Paleontology)
- *Jarvis Klem, Mining Engr., MSO
- *Ed Giebel, Surface Protection Spec., MSO
- *Dave Sinclair, Geologist, MSO

Soil, Air, and Water
Vacant, Soil Scientist, P&EC Div., Work Group Leader
Ron Soiseth, Supervisory Range Con., Phillips RA
Daniel Mueller, Hydrologist, Valley RA
Daniel Tippy, Soil Scientist, Havre RA
*Jim Petersen, Physical Scientist, MSO
*Larry Pointer, Cons. Agronomist, MSO
*Mike Whittington, Hydrologist, MSO
*Mike Rollings, Soil Scientist, MSO

Lands
Vacant, Realty Specialist, Res. Staff, LDO, Work Group Leader
Vacant, Realty Specialist, Valley RA
Vacant, Realty Specialist, Phillips RA
Vacant, Realty Specialist, Billings RA
*Al Evans, Realty Specialist, MSO

Project Administration
Vacant, Writer/Editor, P&EC Div., Work Group Leader
Vacant, Public Information Spec., LDO
Vacant, Illustrator, P&EC Div., LDO
*Bob Allen, Visual Specialist, MSO
Vacant, Writer Editor, MSO
Graphics Support, Div. of Tech Services & DO
Secretarial Support, MSO Div. of P&EC and DO Div. of Admin.

Social & Economic Conditions
Vacant, Social Scientist, P&EC Div., Work Group Leader
*Loren Cabe, Economist, MSO
*Sexton Orms, Sociologist MSO
*Jerry Jack, Planning Coordinator, MSO

Support Recommendations
Jim Arthur, Realty Spec. (ATROW and Fire), Work Group Leader
*Roy Montgomery, Forestry, MSO
*Otto Kruger, Engineer, MSO
*Ed Croteau, Realty Spec, MSO

*Denotes individuals who will be responsible to work with work groups to generate standards and MFP recommendations, objectives, and rationale. They also will be responsible for inputs as necessary into the development of Step IV URA.

4.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement will be under the direction of the Project Administration Work Group. Detailed work plans will be included in the project workbook.

Public involvement contained here in will correlate with the several phases of the Management Framework Plan and Environmental Impact Statement Process.

Phase I - Project Planning - A public involvement plan (outline) will be prepared, depicting the phases of public involvement. The major issues involved and the specific publics targeted for involvement. The general public is understood to constitute a "specific" public in this sense. A release to all state media should be made during this phase to alert the public of the ES process and its portent. In addition, a notice will be filed in the Federal Register describing the types of resource issues which will be addressed in the MFP/EIS, together with the types of alternatives that will be considered. The general public will then be asked to respond (in writing) if other resource issues exist or if other alternatives should be considered in the MFP/EIS process. This is in addition to those public concerns already expressed in the pre-planning analysis.

Phase II - Resource Conditions and Recommendations. During unit resource analysis steps 3 and 4, area resource specialists should contact specific publics. The purposes of these contacts are three-fold: alerting influential members of the local communities to the MFP/EIS process; developing additional input on resource profiles; and as an aide in developing management opportunities. Emphasis should be directed in developing an ongoing dialogue with the publics to preempt misunderstandings of the MFP/EIS process.

Phase III - Alternative Plans and Environmental Assessment - This Phase will entail two media releases and three public open houses as a minimum. A first release, covering the statement geographical area plus the Great Falls media, will set forth in some detail the alternative plans developed. The release should also state the time and place of three open houses as an opportunity for public review and comment on the plans. A two week comment period to follow will be succeeded by a second media release notifying the public of the preferred plan selected by the District Manager.

The open houses will be held in Havre, Malta, and Glasgow as sufficient to cover the Statement area. Additional public meetings may be held according to need, recommendation of area managers and concurrence of the District Manager. An optional action could include direct mailings of the selected plan with a composite of public comment to selected publics.

Phase IV - Draft MFP/EIS (& Summary) Processing and Public Review. Release of the draft MFP/EIS shall be preceded by a statewide media release notifying the public of the documents availability and source locations. The release should also announce the prescribed public comment period and subsequent action to be taken by the Bureau. Draft documents are to be mailed to selected publics.

An optional action would be to hold either open houses or regular public meetings in the communities mentioned above - at the end of the comment period.

Phase V - Final MFP/EIS. Public comments will be incorporated and revisions made as relevant during this final phase of document preparation. Two statewide media releases, one required and the other optional, are advisable. The optional release would specify any changes made as a result of formal public comment and notify the State Director's sign-off. The required release would advise the public of the final document's availability. The optional release could be incorporated in the required release.

Major Issues to be Addressed. - Issues to be addressed in the public affairs program are synonymous with those set forth under Section 1.6 Resource Issues, of this preparation plan.

A partial listing of publics for contact and involvement during the EIS process follows:

VEGETATION AND RANGE

Montana Public Lands Council (Monitoring Project)
Montana Livestock Association
Montana Stockgrowers
State Department of Livestock
State Department of Agriculture
University of Montana, Missoula
Northern Great Plains Resource Council
Natural Resources Defense Council
Montana Department of Fish and Game

RECREATION AND WILDERNESS

Friends of the Earth
Sierra Club
Audubon Society
State Historic Preservation Office
Wilderness Society
Montana Wilderness Association
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

WILDLIFE

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Montana Department of Fish and Game
Audubon Society
Trout Unlimited
Wildlife Society

LANDS

Rural Electrification Cooperative
County Commissioners
County Planning Boards
State Highways Department
State Public Service Commission
Department of State Lands
State Department of Community Affairs
Montana Power Company

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

State Department of Education
Chambers of Commerce
State Department of Institutions
State Department of Labor and Industry
State Department of Social and Rehabilitation Service
State Department of Health and Environmental Science
State Department of Community Affairs
University of Montana
Montana State University

MINERALS

U.S. Department of Energy
Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association
U.S. Geological Survey
State Geologist

SOIL, AIR, AND WATER

Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Soil Conservation Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
State Department of Health and Environmental Science

OTHER

Sportsmen's Associations (for all above categories)
Individuals
Environmental Task Force
Environmental Information Center
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
Blackfeet Indian Reservation
Rocky Boy Indian Reservation
Fort Belknap Indian Reservation
Fort Peck Indian Reservation
Provincial Governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada

OUTLINE

5.1 GENERAL OUTLINE

PRAIRIE POTHOLE
MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

		Relation to Present Source Documents and Requirements
CHAPTER 1.	INTRODUCTION	
CHAPTER 2.	OBJECTIVES AND MAJOR ISSUES	
CHAPTER 3.	SUMMARY OF PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN (SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED PLAN IN FINAL)	MFP 3 NEPA, FLPMA
CHAPTER 4.	DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA	Inventory URA 2 URA 3
	Climate and Air Quality	SEP
	Geology	
	Soils	
	Water	
	Vegetation	
	Animals	
	Prehistoric and Historic Features	
	Aesthetics	
	Recreation	
	Economic Conditions	
	Social Conditions	
	Land Use	
	Ecological Site Descriptions	
CHAPTER 5.	RESOURCE POTENTIAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS	NEPA, FLPMA Outlook Guides URA 4
	Regionwide Goals and Objectives	MFP 1
	Lands	PAA
	Minerals	
	Recreation	
	Wildlife	
	Watershed	
	Range	
	Timber	
	Support	

		Relation to Present Source Documents and Requirements
CHAPTER 6.	MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES A. Conflict Identification B. Management Alternatives #1-Enhance Enviromnental Quality #2-Encourage Economic Development #3-Overall Balance Among All Objectives #4-No Action #5-Other Objectives Mix	MFP 2 PDOD CEQ NEPA FLPMA
CHAPTER 7.	PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN (RECOMMEND LAND USE PLAN IN FINAL)	MFP 3 NEPA, FLPMA
CHAPTER 8.	COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES AND PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN (COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES AND RECOMMEND LAND USE PLAN IN FINAL)	MFP 2 MFP 3 NEPA 3 FLPMA
CHAPTER 9.	ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES (OR STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT) -Alternative #1 -Alternative #2 -Alternative #3 -Alternative #4 -Alternative #5 -Special Considerations	Environmental Assessment CEQ FLPMA
CHAPTER 10.	PREPARATION, CONSULTATION, COORDINATION, (PREPARATION, CONSULTATION, AND COMMENTS IN FINAL)	
	APPENDIX GLOSSARY REFERENCES	

(Note: All subordinate headings subject to revision.)

The separate Summary document (Executive Summary type would closely correspond to the above and would relate to NEPA and MFP Summary requirements. This document will contain the overall program direction for the three Resource Areas, and will be followed at a later date by separate summaries for each individual Resource Area.	MFP Summary Brochure NEPA FLPMA

5.2 OUTLINE EXPLANATION

Chapter 1. The introduction chapter would explain general reasons for the plan and other introductory materials.

Chapter 2. The objectives and Major Issues chapter would highlight the resource concerns, direction, conflicts, and public controversies for any BLM management plan for the area.

Chapter 3. The Summary of Preferred (Recommended in Final) Land Use Plan chapter would summarize the preferred plan and the manner in which this plan addressed those major issues surfaced in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4. The Description of the Planning Area chapter should be more than a brief description. The objective of this chapter would be to make the baseline information, upon which BLM plans are developed, available in as much detail as possible. This goes beyond simply describing the affected environment. This is a FLPMA requirement that has been the subject of numerous requests from special interest organizations and other levels of government, and one which would not be met simply by summary maps of a few areas of key information. In any case, one objective of a pilot effort would be to explore the proper level of detail for such a chapter. A major change reflected in this chapter would be the discussion of both environmental component and program component (URA 3 and 4) conditions in one place.

Chapter 5. The Resource Potential and Recommendations chapter would be an option. The integration of the URA 4 and MFP Step 1 with pertinent portions of the Technical Examination and Environmental Assessment Record, the outlook guides, and major objectives from NEPA and FLPMA, is critical to the Bureau's planning process. There needs to be some reflection of this part of the planning process in the combined document.

Chapter 6. The Management Alternatives chapter would include the results of conflict identification and the development of major alternatives. This would be the key section of the combined document. The results would reflect not only the management alternatives for the selection of a preferred plan, but also the proposed and alternative action for NEPA documentation. Given this complexity, experimentation with the best way to approach this section is expected during the pilot effort.

Chapter 7. The Preferred (Recommended in Final) Resource Management Framework Plan chapter would include all the details from which Chapter 3 was taken. This chapter would be the detailed

documentation of step 29 in the MFP/EIS planning process. For each analysis area, and for each program, the preferred plan would reiterate the overriding management objectives, actions which would be taken under the plan (including timing and support requirements), actions designed to insure compatibility with other land uses and management action, results expected from the plan, and special monitoring and implementation requirements.

Chapter 8. The Comparison of Alternatives and Preferred (Recommended in Final) Management Framework Plan chapter would compare Chapter 7 with Chapter 6. This chapter consists of a summary comparison of all beneficial and adverse consequences of the alternative and preferred land use plans. This chapter would use techniques best designed to display advantages and disadvantages of several plans, rather than detailed discussions on a plan-by-plan basis.

Chapter 9. The Environmental Consequences chapter will describe environmental consequences of the preferred plan and alternative plans. It would specifically respond to the proposed CEQ regulations (documentation of impacts; unavoidable, adverse effects; irretrievable resource commitments; and conflicts between short-term use and long-term use of resources). This would be the combined resource management plan and environmental statement reviewable under NEPA (2) (c) and given EIS quality control review by the proposed steering committee and the current department procedure.

Chapter 10. The Preparation, Consultation, and Coordination (and Comments in Final) chapter would include lists of preparers, and agencies and organizations involved in the process (and public documents in the Final).

An Appendix, Glossary, and References would be included as appropriate.

The Summary (Executive Summary type) would meet the environmental impact statement summary requirement and the management framework plan summary requirement. This summary would be printed separately for wider public review than the complete plan might receive, and will contain data stratified by each resource area. For each Resource Area another summary will be prepared depicting management direction pertinent to the individual resource area, including management direction derived from the completion of an Environmental Statement for the Missouri Breaks area.

6.

SPECIAL ISSUES

The following issues are a integral part of the approach that will be taken when the State Director approves this MFP/EIS preparation plan.

6.1 DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

The development of alternatives process will initially identify a variety of national program objectives. These objectives will range from one which will enhance economic development by increasing the value of goods and services provided, and will improve economic stability by maximizing oil and gas production, and livestock grazing; to one which will preserve or enhance environmental quality with primary consideration on wildlife, water quality, primitive and dispersed recreation, and protection of scenic values.

Based on identified needs and problems, alternative plans will be prepared and evaluated based on the objectives. The number of alternative plans will depend on resource capabilities, feasibility, public opinion and the extent that additional alternatives would contribute to the choice of a recommended plan.

The alternative maximizing economic development would include the forage maximization range management alternative. The alternative maximizing environmental quality would include an analysis of the elimination of livestock grazing on public lands (to satisfy the NRDC suit requirements) plus an analysis of the level of grazing determined to be the most desirable environmentally.

A "no action" alternative will assume that the existing level of management, including resource allocation and use, would continue. Current range management direction would also remain the same.

A fourth alternative would provide for the balanced use of the resources without emphasizing either commodity production or environmental protection. At least one level of livestock reduction would be analyzed under this alternative.

All other reasonable alternatives provided by other agencies or the public will also be evaluated. If any viable alternatives are eliminated from detailed study, the reasons for their rejection will be briefly discussed.

An interdisciplinary group will complete an analysis on how the identified objectives and alternatives will affect the various resources, and develop management recommendations for each alternative.

After management recommendations are made by an interdisciplinary group, the analysis process will begin. Compatible and non-compatible programs will be identified. Three major conflict categories will most likely surface during conflict analysis and resolution. These include (1) where the base program recommendations are complementary and no conflict occurs; (2) where conflicts between the various activities surface, but can be mitigated, and the overall objectives are still met; and (3) where conflicts between programs cannot be mitigated and alternatives must be developed.

This analysis will provide the guidance for the various programs, with the economic development and environmental quality objectives providing the outermost parameters. Other viable objectives will fall somewhere between. The generation of new alternatives, or a mix of previously identified alternatives, will undoubtably occur during the public participation process. The final analysis will most likely be addressing four to six alternatives. The preferred management plan will be identified after all alternatives, including various possible combinations of alternatives, have been thoroughly analyzed.

6.2 USE OF SVIM DATA AS A BASE FOR MAKING THE NEEDED VEGETATIVE ALLOCATIONS FOR THE MFP/EIS

The level of inventory detail required in grazing ESs is provided in WO Facsimile Message No. 78-55. Since Montana was not provided the necessary funding for inventory (SVIM) in FY78 nor given any additional time to develop the Prairie Pothole MFP/EIS (due by end of FY81), we adopted a modified SVIM field procedure of representative sampling. This level will provide a gross base from which to allocate vegetation among competing uses and identify areas which may need more intensive transect sampling.

We can, address the level of detail requirements per FM 78-55 in the following manner:

(1) Make a gross allocation of current annual vegetation production by SVIM strata (Range site - condition class - vegetation type). The allocation would be made for all major consumptive ungulates with a composite allocation shown for non-consumptive uses, i.e., watershed, plant maintenance, etc.

(2) Identify those allotments which would continue to be licensed at present use levels and also identify allotments recommended for more intensive transect sampling, based on extent of departure from representative SVIM data.

(3) Identify proposed AMP areas and non-AMP areas.

(4) Identify desired ecological condition class to manage for by range site (ecological site).

(5) Identify plant physiological requirements to accomplish ecological management direction by range site (ecological site). This would be specified by recommending the amount of rest from livestock grazing and/or artificial treatments needed to accomplish ecological management direction by range site.

(6) Identify season of use and class of livestock recommended by range site (ecological site).

(7) Describe the various types, typical locations, and approximate magnitude of range improvements recommended, but not by allotment, nor will we have specific numbers, or specific costs.

6.3 ECOLOGICAL SITES

The range sites described in 6.2 will be the basic land units for analysis and decisionmaking and will be termed Ecological Sites.

Since the Prairie Pothole area is relatively uniform in land type, we anticipate there will be only-eight-to-ten-major ecological sites involved which will cover the entire area. The similar key ecological characteristics will allow decisions to be made which will apply largely across the board to the entire ecological site. Vegetation allocation would be made at the SVIM strata level and where unique conditions exist, separate decisions can be made on a case by case basis.

Procedure (see also 6.9, Procedural Steps):

Ecological sites will be carried forward from inventory and described in URA Step 2 as overall units.

In Steps 3 and 4 of URA, the existing situation and opportunities for development will be described by activity, by resource area. The discussion will be keyed to the ecological sites where applicable. It should be noted that the ecological sites have application to the Steps 3 and 4 discussions in almost all activities as shown in the following examples:

1. Lands: Formulation of stipulations for right-of-way authorizations and other land use authorizations depends on reclamation potential of given land type. This potential would be closely tied to ecological sites.

2. Minerals: Mineral exploration and development (such as for oil and gas and bentonite) almost inevitably causes surface disturbance. Again reclamation potential, and hence decisions on authorizations, depend on the characteristics of the ecological sites involved.

3. Forest Products: The forest land type, extremely limited in the Prairie Pothole area, would constitute an ecological site in itself or combination of ecological sites and would lend itself well to analysis by ELU.

4. Range Management: Perhaps a preponderance of the decisions from the land use plan will be directly or indirectly related to use of the land for livestock grazing. The ecological sites (range sites) are adapted from the inventory process designed to arrive at proper livestock grazing practices.

5. Watershed: The primary concerns of managing watersheds to stabilize soils, produce water, and enhance water quality must be geared to the ecological characteristics of the land including soil, vegetation, climate, etc. The SVIM procedures from which the ecological sites are derived were developed to provide such information.

6. Wildlife: Decisions relating to wildlife habitat management will, in most instances, apply to an ecological site or grouping of sites and can often be aggregated to apply over the entire MFP/EIS area, thereby avoiding repetition.

7. Recreation: The visual component of the recreation activity lends itself to the ecological site concept because VRM classes are influenced heavily by many categories of ecological sites. Recreation potential or lack of it also depends partly on physical or ecological characteristics of a land type. The probability of occurrence of historic and prehistoric sites is much greater on some land types than on others.

At the beginning of MFP Step 1, the District Office and State Office will define those overall objectives and recommendations which will be applicable areawide. For example, the conditions or parameters (soil type, slope, vegetation condition, etc.) under which sagebrush spraying would occur will be defined. Once these parameters are decided and agreed upon, the actual objectives and recommendations will be formulated by resource area based on the ecological sites where possible and each resource area will address those situations which would differ because of unique conditions.

The MFP Step 2 analysis, including the assessment of impacts, will be completed on an areawide basis to avoid the possibility of having resource areas program for different preferred management directions for an ecological site which contains similar characteristics and is found throughout the planning area. However, once the overall conflicts, impacts, and preferred management direction are identified, the results of the multiple use analysis will be stratified in the text by resource area.

By using the above described procedure, a more unified approach is assured to planning for a rather uniform planning area and yet provision is made for treatment of unique situations on a case-by-case basis.

6.4 NRDC SUIT REQUIREMENT

The legal procedures BLM is now operating under with regard to the NRDC suit on grazing of the public lands requires environmental impact statements prior to implementing AMPs.

The Montana BLM plans to satisfy this suit requirement with the Prairie Pothole MFP/EIS which will address the land capability of public lands, reasonable alternatives, and environmental consequences of the resource management plan. This document will address the overall physical capabilities and limitations of the public lands in the area of concern (Steps 2 through 4 of URA), plus identify the various management options and resulting conflicts (Steps 1, 2, and 3 of MFP plus alternatives).

The Prairie Pothole MFP/EIS process will discuss all activity programs and potentials (not just those issues surrounding the range activity and related impacts). Therefore, the MFP/EIS should meet the primary question of describing the public lands' actual land use capability plus all reasonable alternatives to the preferred plan of action. See section 6.2 for details on how vegetation inventory and allocation will be done.

6.5 MAPPING PROGRAM

Mapping for this pilot project will be handled somewhat differently from previous Bureau Planning System documents. The most significant deviation from previous efforts will be the use of hard copy maps (rather than mylar transparent overlays) as the basic working tool in the display of resource inventory data, conflict resolutions, and documentation of alternatives in the MFP/EIS. However, the Lewistown District will still prepare 1/2 inch to the mile overlays for each activity, which will serve as the basic data consolidation point from which resource data, conflicts, etc., will be compiled for final use in the MFP/EIS.

The major advantage of the hard copy mapping system is that it would make it easier for interested parties to follow the planning/EIS process. This method will hopefully correct a major criticism of BLM's failure to meet FLPMA requirements and the needs of the public regarding the mylar overlay technique used in the past. Other land management agencies and the general public cannot readily be shown how the Bureau arrived at final recommendations and conclusions through the analysis process without having many large mylar overlays, which have proven difficult to display and store, i.e., the overlay method is useable only by the specialists who compiled them.

Resource specialists will work with 1/2 inch to the mile scale maps throughout the planning process during the first phase of the MFP/EIS. These maps will eventually be reduced to 1/8 inch to the mile for reproduction.

If a specialist must display a sensitive area that cannot be accomplished at the 1/8 inch to the mile scale, blowups at any scale desired for one page inserts can be approved and provided for.

Our goal is to end up with a map product that will allow mass reproduction for public and other agency review. The working maps should also be suitable to use as a base for reduced scale, mass printed, color maps for the final document. The hard copy maps may present some limitations in identifying conflicts at MFP 2, but their overall utility will hopefully outweigh this potential disadvantage.

Critical mapping and visual deadlines are as follows:

1. Hard copy base maps for distribution to work group teams (4)* Due on 09-17-79.

2. Documentation of present condition including maps. Specialists and YACC transfer data from maps and overlays used in inventory to 1/2 inch to the mile present condition maps (11)

3. Documentation of recommendations including maps and visuals (16)

4. Documentation of alternatives including maps and visuals (22)

5. Documentation of any new alternatives including maps (26)

6. Documentation of preferred plan with map of preferred plan (30)

7. Finalize MFP/EIS and Summary

*Numbers in parentheses are step numbers on process chart.

6.6 STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee would include a representative of the State Director, the Lewistown District Manager, the MSO Divisions of Resources and Technical Services, the MSO Branches of Planning and Environmental Coordination and the Washington Office Division of Range and Environmental and Planning Coordination.

Since the focus of the effort is on a field level plan, the steering committee would meet in the field principally at Lewistown to review, and recommend clearance of documents. The steering committee would be under the chairmanship of the Montana State Office, Division of Planning and Environmental Coordination. Any disagreements in direction or review would be resolved at the steering committee level. This would be more efficient than memoranda and associated lag times, and would ensure one continuously resolved set of directions for those working on the project.

6.7 DOCUMENTATION

As this is a new concept in planning and environmental assessment, all aspects that are unique to combining the planning system and the EIS process will be documented so that future MFP/EIS (or RMP/EIS) efforts can benefit. Even though the exact method has not been detailed, the Project Manager will be given overall responsibility for assuring that proper documentation occurs, including documenting all aspects of alternative development, conflict identification, and environmental consequences. In addition, he/she will be given the overall lead in assessing, modifying, and recommending each new technique used during the process. In turn, the Technical Coordinator will be responsible for documenting any new procedures that have proven successful for the various work groups. The Work Group Leader for Project Administration will be responsible for documenting any new techniques developed in public involvement, manuscript flow, review procedures, formatting, printing, and word processing.

6.8 INVENTORY DEFICIENCIES

The Lewistown District and MSO prepared a pre-planning analysis which depicted a range of issues that will be addressed in this MFP/EIS (see Section 1.6 Resource Issues).

The Pre-Planning Analysis surfaced several areas where resource inventories were lacking to do an adequate allocation within the proposed MFP/EIS. An intensified inventory schedule during FY 79 will serve to provide sufficient inventory for making broad resource allocations within most resource categories. However, in the following instances, resource management decisions may lack specificity mainly due to lack of adequate inventory data:

1. Coal - To the extent available, Unit Resource Analysis information will be gathered. However, the planning process will not be completed concerning the application of unsuitability criteria, multiple use tradeoffs, or surface owner views, on the coal lands. There is only a small portion of one KRCRA located on the extreme southern boundry of the Medicine Lake Planning Unit. The major coal areas are not designated KRCRAs. It is felt that the lack of demand at this time would make detailed treatment of the coal unjustified in the current planning effort.

2. Recreation Activities - There will be an intensive inventory effort for the various elements of the recreation program, but due to the time and budgetary constraints several of these elements may fall short of optimum for discussion and resolution of conflicts within the MFP process. Some of the elements that may fall in this category are:

Elements	Comments
Recreation Information System (RIS)	Due to lack of time, some inventory data may lack completeness and narratives may lack specificity.
Visual Resource Management (VRM)	VRM classes may lack justification, and in conflict situations may not stand.
Off Road Vehicles (ORV)	Lack of specificity in data may hamper making solidly based ORV designations in the MFP.

Natural History/Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)	Incomplete inventories due to time constraints may cause lack of specificity from which to make adequate MFP land use allocation recommendations.
Wilderness Designation	Wilderness study areas will be designated if any of the present roadless areas qualify. Time will not permit adequate study of any of these wilderness study areas to the degree necessary to make recommendation to DOI and Congress on potential additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System.
Cultural Resources	There will not be adequate data from planned inventories to have valid statistical data from which to forecast numbers of archeologic sites, potential impacts, etc. on much of the MFP/EIS area.

3. Vegetation Allocation by Allotment - Because we are using ecological sites as the basis for vegetative allocation, it will be impossible to address the allocation of livestock forage, range improvements, or socio-economic considerations by individual allotment. These will all be dealt with in range activity plans (AMPs) based on the broader allocations of the MFP/EIS by ecological sites (see also 6.2).

6.9 PROCEDURAL STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN THE PRAIRIE POTHOLE LAND USE PLAN

In an effort to simplify the problems associated with producing a MFP/EIS for the entire Prairie Pothole area (which incorporates major portions of the Havre, Valley, and Phillips Resource Areas), the procedural steps which will be taken by Montana BLM for this project are summarized on the following page on a flow sheet entitled "Procedural Model."

PROCEDURAL MODEL

HAVRE RESOURCE AREA PHILLIPS RESOURCE AREA VALLEY RESOURCE AREA

STEP 1 Inventory for each resource area (SVIM, VRM, wilderness, etc.).

(Areawide URA 2)

STEP 2 Define ecological sites (range sites) which are found within Prairie Pothole area and describe the potential capabilities and limitations of each. Also see 6.2 and 6.3.

URA 3 and 4

STEP 3 By resource area, describe existing situation and opportunities for development by activity (Steps 3 & 4 of URA). Key to major ecological sites, e.g., within a given range site, wildlife would describe the existing habitat situation with regard to game, nongame, rare/endangered species, and describe opportunities to maintain or modify the habitat within a given range site for a given specie(s). Note: Although each resource activity cannot key the development of Steps 3-4 of the URA to specific range sites (for example, minerals, recreation), this process will still allow for a more recognizable method of determining possible impacts and potential mitigable measures later on in the document.

Parameters of Step 1 MFP

STEP 4 Prepare basic parameters to help define overall objectives and Step 1 MFP recommendations which will be applicable areawide, with allowances made for specific situations within each resource area. For example, a Step 1, MFP Objective/Recommendation to protect or preserve riparian habitat for wildlife use will be written such that it will be applicable throughout the planning area, unless the riparian area is unique to a given resource area.

Step 1 of MFP

STEP 5 Prepare Step 1 MFP by Resource Area, based (where possible) on range site delineations outlined in Step 2 above.

Step 2 of MFP

STEP 6 Prepare Step 2 of the MFP for the entire planning area, defining conflicts within and between resource activities and within or between resource areas. Ultimately various alternatives will also surface during this stage in the process, through economic development and environmental protection should serve as the outermost parameters. This 6th Step in the MFP analysis is consolidated in order to avoid the possibility of having resource areas program for different preferred management directions (in MFP 2) for an ecological site which contains similar characteristics and is found throughout the planning area. However, once the overall conflicts, impacts, and preferred management direction is identified, the results of the multiple use analysis will be stratified in the text by resource area. If there is dissension between the Area Managers over a preferred management direction, the Assistant District Manager in the district will serve as arbitrator.

Step 3 of MFP

STEP 7 Prepare one MFP/EIS containing the preferred plan of action plus alternatives considered. Management direction and its impacts (both positive and negative) will be stratified by resource area.

Summary

STEP 8 One summary document will be prepared containing the overall analysis of the preferred mix plus alternatives. In keeping with Step 6 of this flow sheet, the impact(s) of the preferred plan and alternatives will be depicted by resource area.

Summaries of Management - Direction by RA

STEP 9 After the final MFP/EIS document and summary are issued, each resource area will combine the results of decisions reached in the Prairie Pothole planning effort (as it affects the RA), together with those decisions reached in the Missouri Breaks effort into one document. This document will serve to guide overall management direction for the resource area until such time as a planning update is completed which will cover the entire resource area.

6.10 208 WATER QUALITY PLANNING

Section 208 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 requires state and local governments to develop planning processes which maintain or improve water quality. Specifically, the 208 plans are intended to achieve the 1983 national goal of "water quality which provides for protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and provides for recreation in and on the water by July 1, 1983."

In the MFP/EIS area, the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, Water Quality Bureau, is developing the 208 plan. This plan will provide an assessment of the water quality situation and provide management alternatives. These management alternatives are known as the best management practices (BMPs) which can be employed to protect and improved water quality.

Step 4 of the URA will identify the various BMPs available to enhance water quality. Examples of BMPs include removal of livestock from riparian areas, leaving buffer strips along streams during logging, construction proper sanitation facilities at high use recreation areas, etc.

The land use decisions made in the MFP/EIS area must incorporate these BMPs to enhance water quality.